

City of Locust Land Use Plan 2014

Adopted

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Businesses and individuals make plans every day. Local governments often do the same – making plans for future services, events and overall growth. Making plans says a couple of things about a place; 1) There is belief in and hope in a tomorrow, and 2) a belief that a positive difference can be made for the future. By planning, a county has determined change is occurring and a course of action must be formulated to develop the way it desires to grow.

A few good reasons to plan:

- A good, clearly articulated plan forms the basis of a community's vision of its future. Without it, regulatory controls can be legally challenged as arbitrary.
- A good plan ensures that a community can provide services like water and sewer, emergency services, and law enforcement efficiently while maintaining a relatively low tax rate for its citizens.
- A good planning process involves a wide variety of citizens and interests. Once a community reaches consensus, the vision created in the plan can make future decision-making easier and less politically charged.
- Resources provided by state and federal governments are increasingly tied to good plans and planning processes. Highway funds, water and sewer grants, and environmental clean-up funding are easier to bring to a community if you have a well-crafted plan that shows community involvement.

Source: NCAPA Citizen Planner Training Materials

It is important for local governments to be visionary and attempt to forecast future conditions and plan accordingly. This land use plan does exactly that. It looks at past and current development trends, analyzes demographic and economic data, captures a vision of what the community desires to be, and presents a number of policies that represent the values of the City of Locust related to land use.

What does the future hold for the City of Locust? No one knows for sure. No one can predict how the City will function and what it will look like in 15 to 20 years. Hopefully, this plan will inspire you and the City's leaders to build a stronger and more prosperous City. It is just a plan. Without action to implement the City of Locust Land Use Plan, it will be just that – a plan on a shelf. With committed leadership it can help guide the future development of the City of Locust.

SECTION 2: PURPOSE OF PLAN

The Land Use Plan is designed to provide the City of Locust with a proactive guide for managing future physical growth and development over the next 15 to 20 years. The plan can also serve as the beginning of a program to preserve the City's quality of life, natural attributes, and agricultural lands. Also, the Land Use Plan attempts to lay out guidelines on the type of development the City seeks to promote along with areas of the City that are suitable for continued development of services and infrastructure to support such development. This plan shall officially be known and cited as the "City of Locust Land Use Plan," except as referred herein as "Land Use Plan" or "Plan".

The main area of focus of the Plan pertains to land use because uses of land (e.g., agricultural/forestry, commercial, industrial, and residential) create tangible impacts upon surrounding communities that can be both positive and negative. These impacts can affect a community's visual environment, population density, traffic patterns, quality of life, tax base, and public services. Planning and managing for the City's future land use will both help to facilitate desired land use goals and to mitigate undesired outcomes.

In order to be an effective guide for managing future growth, it is vital that this Plan maintains a policy orientation. This means that an overall vision for growth is articulated, and goals and policies are formulated in order to achieve the vision. As part of this policy orientation, this Plan attempts a proactive planning approach that recognizes the current need to implement key policies to successfully accomplish desired future outcomes. Ultimately, this approach minimizes the need for reactive planning and gives the City some control over its future. It is crucial, therefore, that this Plan is reviewed and updated on a regular interval of approximately five (5) years in order to remain proactive and relevant toward managing future growth and land use.

Finally, this Plan provides a foundation for further detailed studies and land use ordinance revisions. With regard to detailed studies, this Plan does not achieve a high level of detail that is necessary for effective area or corridor plans. However, the Plan does provide a solid groundwork from which to conduct future detailed studies that would address specific growth management issues of Locust, such as the NC 200 and NC 24/27 highway corridors. With regard to land use ordinance revisions, the policies contained in this Plan do not become enforceable laws or regulations once adopted. Rather, the Plan serves as a policy guide that provides justification for making informed land use and zoning decisions. The primary method for implementing and enforcing this Plan's policies is through text amendments to the City's land use ordinances. However, this Plan may also be used to assist in implementing policy in conjunction with other plans including economic development plans, strategic plans, water and sewer plans, emergency management and hazard mitigation plans, and budgetary plans.

SECTION 3: THE PLANNING PROCESS

The land use planning process began with the formation of the Land Use Plan Committee in August 2013. The City Council appointed people with a diversity of backgrounds and geographic representation to serve on the Committee, which was responsible for guiding and overseeing the update of the Land Use Plan. To achieve this purpose, the Committee generally met monthly in a series of meetings in which the members discussed the most important growth and development issues facing the City over the next 20 years. During their meetings, the stakeholders developed consensus around recommendations to help guide future land use decisions in Locust.

A detailed timeline capturing the steps in the process are listed below:

Land Use Plan Timeline

August 2013: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Provided overview of land use planning basics
- Discussed primary land use issues facing the City
- Provided overview of land use planning process and schedule

October 2013: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Discussed future land use map

November 2013: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Discussed desirable and undesirable future land uses
- Discussed plan format

January 2014: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Developed Residential Development goals and strategies

February 2014: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Developed Commercial and Industrial Development goals and strategies

March 2014: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Continued to develop Future Land Use Map

April 2014: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Continued to develop Future Land Use Map

May 2014: Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

- Developed Parks and Open Space and City Center goals and strategies

SECTION FOUR: LAND USE PLAN VISION STATEMENT, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

Land Use Plan Goal

The Locust Land Use Plan seeks to expand the City's influence as a major residential center for the Charlotte region through a revitalized local economy, expanded recreational offerings, and a unique mixed-use City Center serving as the focus of community life, transforming Locust into a well-connected and easily accessible destination for all ages.

Vision Statement

The City of Locust will continue its growth as a major residential center in the greater Charlotte Metropolitan Region, offering citizens the benefits of a small town life within a short commute from several regional employment centers. A revitalized local economy, featuring an expanded and fully occupied Industrial Park and an emergent health care industry, has also brought jobs into the City. Entertainment venues and local businesses offering additional retail and dining options have been developed and are flourishing. Housing choices will range from gated communities to small multi-family housing units, accommodating residents of all ages and income levels. Elderly living residential centers allow additional housing choices for aging citizens. The City will continue to be known for its extensive youth athletic programs and tournaments; construction of a small hotel will accommodate incoming players and guests and contribute to the area's unique tourism opportunities, such as the Reed Gold Mine and local farm and vineyards. Recreation will continue to be a community focus, enhanced by expansions to Officer Jeff Shelton Memorial Park and the development of new parks and facilities. The fully realized City Center development will serve as the focal point of community life and will be connected to neighborhoods, the school, and the main retail and business corridors through a system of greenways, sidewalks, and golf cart paths.

Development Goals

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Residential development in Locust is primarily single-family homes in established neighborhoods, with small pockets of multi-family units (duplexes, townhouses, small apartment complexes). There are approximately twenty traditional neighborhoods, built between the City's housing boom in the 1960s and 1970s and now, with many subdivisions currently in development.

- Abi's Place
- Barbara Ann Park
- Brentwood
- Charleston Place
- Creekview Estates
- Dogwood Acres
- Heritage
- Hickory Ridge
- King's Heights
- Locust Valley
- Meadow Creek
- Pine Bluff Estates
- Redah Acres
- Sherwood Park
- Simpson Road
- Sunset
- The Meadows
- Western Hills
- Whispering Hills
- Whitney

Main Issues

1. The City's sewer capacity allocation issues severely limit multi-family development.
2. The City currently has a proliferation of subsidized multi-family development, mainly apartment complexes. Yet there is a lack of market rate multi-family units available to middle income workers.
3. Neighborhoods are not connected, either within or to each other. A lack of service roads within subdivisions has resulted in overloading of the main roads with serious traffic congestion issues.
4. The open space density bonus favors the development of compact, small lot subdivisions with no provisions for incentives for larger lots.
5. The current multi-family developments tend to be large apartment complexes, in contrast to the isolated multi-family infill development the City prefers.
6. The open space density bonus could allow for the development of very high density subdivisions, in contrast to the mid-level density the City prefers.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Encourage a wide range of housing types and price points in order to meet the diverse and evolving needs of current and future residents and promote diverse neighborhoods.

Strategy 1.1: Develop guidelines and criteria to identify areas most appropriate for higher density housing types, such as condominiums, townhouses, and apartment complexes.

Strategy 1.2: Work with local real estate agents and developers to actively market land within the City Center for future market rate multi-family development and single-family housing.

Strategy 1.3: Continue to work with Stanly County to make utilities affordable for new development to allow for future incentives or lower fees to spur development, once a significant amount of utility debt has been paid down.

Strategy 1.4: Commission a detailed income analysis for the City and surrounding area to determine what types and price points of residential development the local market will support.

Strategy 1.5: Encourage the development of infill spaces within residential areas with low-density multi-family housing (single apartment buildings, townhouses rows, duplexes, triplexes, etc.)



Patio Home



Townhomes



Apartments



Single-Family Residential

Goal 2: Encourage connectivity through well-planned, multi-modal, and walkable neighborhoods.

Strategy 2.1: Require new developments to provide multiple transportation options (greenway walking trails, sidewalks, service roads, etc.) to enhance neighborhood connectivity and promote ease of traveling.

Strategy 2.2: Require developers of new subdivisions to provide stub-outs for future service roads or grant an easement to the City to allow for construction.

Strategy 2.3: Talk to landowners in existing subdivisions about obtaining right-of-way access in order to build service roads allowing for greater connectivity through and between neighborhoods and preventing traffic congestion.

Strategy 2.4: Review the City's Land Development Ordinance and revise, as necessary, to ensure the regulations concerning emergency access align with the state's new Fire Code regulations.

Strategy 2.5: Review and revise the City's Land Development Ordinance to separate subdivisions into a minor or major category, governed by different road access requirements.

Strategy 2.6: Utilize Developer's Agreements, when available on large subdivisions, to allow for variations in frontage requirements and road widths in exchange for the building of service roads.

Strategy 2.7: Review and revise the open space density bonus clause in the Land Development Ordinance to provide incentives for developers building service roads in neighborhoods.

Goal 3: Encourage a balanced mix of lot sizes and amenities within neighborhoods to provide diverse living choices and recreational options for area residents.

Strategy 3.1: Re-examine the open space density bonus to determine how it can be utilized to encourage large lots within subdivisions.

Strategy 3.2: Review and revise infrastructure requirements in the Land Development Ordinance to add a formula based upon lot size to encourage rural neighborhoods requiring lesser amounts of infrastructure (sidewalks, curb and gutter, etc.).

Strategy 3.3: Continue to promote usable open space by encouraging the use of active recreational features (pocket parks, walking trails, neighborhood greens, etc.) through the open space bonus density incentive.

Strategy 3.4: Require developers to submit enforceable sustainability plans for amenities (parks, pools, tennis courts, walking trails, etc.) installed within neighborhoods to ensure maintenance and upkeep.

Strategy 3.5: Re-examine the open space density bonus clause to determine if a full build-out will result in larger densities than the City desires.



Rural neighborhood with less infrastructure needs



Neighborhood amenity requiring maintenance

Goal 4: Encourage innovative design standards that protect the integrity of existing neighborhoods and create aesthetically pleasing new neighborhoods.

Strategy 4.1: Review and revise the architectural standards in the Land Development Ordinance to ensure architectural consistency in incomplete subdivisions when a new developer acquires the property.

Strategy 4.2: Review and revise the architectural standards in the Land Development Ordinance to ensure quality building materials are used and appropriate residential sizing is employed.



Architectural Consistency



Architectural Inconsistency

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial development in Locust is primarily concentrated along the NC Highway 24/27 and NC Highway 200 corridors. While development along the NC Highway 24/27 commercial corridor tends to be heavier retail and institutional uses (healthcare facilities and community college), the NC Highway 200 mixed-use corridor features business offices and smaller pockets of retail shopping.

Main Issues

1. No right-of-way is available on Highway 200 for improvements to increase traffic capacity.
2. Telecommuting has negatively impacted the leasing of professional office space.
3. Traffic congestion on Highway 24/27 due to proliferation of retail establishments.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Promote Highway 24/27 as the City's main commercial corridor and Highway 200 as a secondary commercial corridor populated by less intensive uses.

Strategy 1.1: Encourage new commercial development that will generate traffic demand to locate along the Highway 24/27 corridor (i.e. restaurants, shopping centers, large retail stores, etc.).

Strategy 1.2: Require commercial establishments to front Highway 24/27 and locate any associated storage facilities behind the building, unless other arrangements have been agreed to under a Developer's Agreement.

Strategy 1.3: Continue to utilize Developer's Agreements for large commercial establishments that exceed the 80,000 square foot limit to ensure that any negative impacts to neighboring properties are minimized.

Strategy 1.4: Discourage new residential development along the Highway 24/27 corridor; as existing residential properties are moved or sold, encourage the conversion to commercial use.

Strategy 1.5: Reserve the Highway 200 corridor for less intensive commercial uses (i.e. small restaurants and retail shops, institutional uses, light industrial, etc.) that generate less traffic and do not negatively impact neighboring residential properties.



NC 200 Mixed-Use Corridor



NC 24/27 Commercial Corridor

Goal 2: Promote traffic calming measures along Highway 24/27 and other areas of high traffic congestion.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to work with NC Department of Transportation on alleviating traffic congestion along Highway 24/27 (i.e. additional stoplights, limiting left turns during peak traffic times, etc.).

Strategy 2.2: Promote the inclusion of infrastructure for alternative modes of travel to commercial areas (i.e. bicycle lanes, golf cart paths, and pedestrian walkways) to reduce local vehicular traffic.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial development in Locust is primarily located in the Meadow Creek Business Park, which is privately owned and can accommodate industrial, commercial, and office uses. There is one large industrial business (Chicago Tube and Iron) located here, along with several smaller light industrial uses and a number of vacant lots. All the infrastructure and utilities are complete, with underground gas, electric, water, and sewer, along with paved roads, curb and gutter, and street lamps.

Main Issues

1. Privately owned Business Park is in competition with county owned parks (Gaston County and Cabarrus County).
2. Land adjacent to Business Park is vulnerable to purchase for other uses.
3. Industrial development can have negative impacts on neighboring commercial and residential uses.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Promote and reserve the City's industrial property for its highest economic use.

Strategy 1.1: Work collaboratively with the Stanly County Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce to promote and market the Industrial Park to prospective developers.

Strategy 1.2: Utilize Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping to locate potential industrial sites with minimum, pre-defined criteria and actively market this information to prospective industrial developers.

Strategy 1.3: Identify types of industry that are most compatible with the local environment, workforce, and economy and determine what they require in terms of infrastructure and amenities.

Strategy 1.4: Encourage adaptive re-use of former industrial buildings and sites.



Large industrial use



Adaptive Reuse Potential

Goal 2: Protect neighboring properties from any harmful or negative impacts of the industrial process.

Strategy 2.1: Require new industrial development to install and maintain adequate landscaped screening and buffering to protecting the value of neighboring lands.

Strategy 2.2: Encourage light industrial uses that will minimize negative impacts on the environment and overall quality of life of all residents.

Strategy 2.3: Utilize the industrial zoning districts to protect the community from the establishment or expansion of industries that are incompatible with public health, safety, and welfare, and that may be detrimental to the economic prosperity of existing businesses.

Strategy 2.4: Require industrial uses locating along major transportation corridors to provide landscaping and screening that enhances the aesthetic image of the City.



Landscaped buffering of industrial use



Vacant parcels ready for development

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The City of Locust owns and operates one park: Officer Jeff Shelton Memorial Park, which contains four baseball fields, three soccer fields, four tennis courts, two basketball courts, walking trails, picnic shelters, and playground. The City works in conjunction with the county school system on the use of the outdoor playing fields in exchange for use of the school's indoor courts.

Main Issues

- Increasing use of current athletic fields has complicated scheduling for the various youth leagues and tournaments

- Stormwater drainage issue from runoff on Highway 200 in Officer Jeff Shelton Memorial Park
- Facilities in need of upgrade at Officer Jeff Shelton Memorial Park (restrooms, concession stands, etc.)
- Officer Jeff Shelton Memorial Park is not fully connected to water and sewer service

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Improve and expand facilities at Officer Jeff Shelton Memorial Park.

Strategy 1.1: Expand the passive use of the park through installation of new facilities, such as walking trails, picnic shelters, and an amphitheater.

Strategy 1.2: Upgrade restroom facilities and connect the park to full water and sewer service.

Strategy 1.3: Conserve the natural features of the site by routing the trails around wetlands and installing raised walkways.

Strategy 1.4: Address the stormwater drainage problem through the installation of rain gardens or drainage ponds and stream channel definition.

Strategy 1.5: Require additional stormwater control features on new development located adjacent to the park.



Walking trail with fit stations



Playground



Ballfields



Stormwater drainage issue area

Goal 2: Enhance the City’s recreational offerings through the acquisition of new park lands and expansion of recreational programs.

Strategy 2.1: Identify property best suited to a passive use park, connected to neighborhoods, the school, and other community facilities through a system of sidewalks and greenways, and pursue acquisition.

Strategy 2.2: Establish facilities that will draw visitors to the area and generate economic gain (i.e. equestrian facilities, campgrounds, etc.).

Strategy 2.3: Expand the city’s sports league program by providing additional playing fields to accommodate increasing youth league needs and to provide playing space for new adult leagues.

Strategy 2.4: Include such features as a community garden, Farmer’s Market, and event center in park designs and seek funding for future construction.

Goal 3: Support the recreational programs offered by other city, county, and private entities.

Strategy 3.1: Coordinate with the West Stanly Senior Center to offer recreational and cultural programming for the city’s elderly population.

Strategy 3.2: Require new residential subdivisions to build and maintain recreational areas including, at minimum, playground facilities.

Strategy 3.3: Continue to coordinate with the school system on the sharing of athletic facilities.

CITY CENTER

The City of Locust has supported the work of private developer Main Street Properties, Inc. in construction of a new multi-use city center. The plan was developed in 2004 and progress has been made in retail, public, and residential construction. When fully built out, the Town Center will encompass a 1320 foot radius, including both sides of a portion of Highway 24/27 and extending to Highway 200. It will contain seven neighborhood blocks, 149,100 feet of retail space, 9,225 feet of civic space, a 26,675 foot Farmer’s Market, and abundant areas of open space (plazas, squares, playgrounds, greens, greenways, etc.).

Main Issues

- The economic downturn has slowed the construction and sale of residential units.
- Telecommuting has negatively impacted the leasing of professional office space.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Continue to support the full build-out of the City Center.

Strategy 1.1: Work in conjunction with Main Street Properties, Inc. to review and revise plan, as needed.

Strategy 1.2: Work on enhancing connectivity in and out of the City Center by identifying potential new roadways and walking trails and work with landowners on the granting of easements.



City Center



City Center retail uses



City Center public square space



City Center institutional uses

SECTION FIVE: FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map for Locust depicts generalized land use patterns for the City for the next 15-20 years. Like all future land use maps, it is general in nature and should be used only as a guide by decision-makers in making future land use decisions. No attempt has been made to identify land use patterns on a lot-by-lot basis. Rather, land use decisions should be made using the map as a guide together with the policies contained in this Plan.

On the Future Land Use Map, land is classified as located within one of eight primary land use classifications and may also be located within the one overlay classification: City Center. Following is a description of these classifications.

City Center: The traditional center of the City, incorporating a traditional mix of commercial, office, institutional, residential, and open space uses. The City Center is designed to serve the entire community, is pedestrian oriented, and features reduced building setbacks. The City Center is an overlay classification.

Commercial Corridor: The NC Highway 24/27 Commercial Corridor encompasses an area of intensive retail use primarily accessible via automobile. Residential uses should be discouraged. To ease traffic, the number of new curb cuts should be minimized and shared driveways encouraged. Landscaping of large parking lots should be emphasized.

Mixed-Use Corridor: The NC Highway 200 Mixed-Use Corridor features a mixture of uses, such as less intensive retail, office, institutional, light industrial, and residential, carefully designed and located to ensure compatibility and harmony within the landscape.

Industrial: Areas designed for the manufacturing and processing of goods. Ideal industrial areas will be larger sites, often located together in an Industrial Park, and have ready access to state transportation networks. Landscaping and the use of natural buffers should be emphasized to mitigate impacts on surrounding properties.

Institutional (Public Use): Areas that contain uses such as schools, churches, or other facilities offering services to the public.

Low Density Residential: Residential neighborhoods and areas that feature lots in excess of $\frac{3}{4}$ acre. These areas require less infrastructure (curb and gutter, sidewalks, public water and sewer, etc.), maximize the preservation of open space, and are characterized by larger lots in established neighborhoods or residential areas.

Medium Density Residential: Residential neighborhoods and areas that feature lots sized from $\frac{1}{2}$ acre up to $\frac{3}{4}$ acre. These areas often feature traditional neighborhood development and can contain scattered multi-family residential complexes or units. These areas require more infrastructure.

High Density Residential: Residential neighborhoods and areas that feature smaller lots up to ½ acre in size. These areas are often located in close proximity to commercial areas and major thoroughfares and can contain scattered multi-family residential complexes or units. These areas are generally infrastructure intensive.

Parks and Open Space: Areas designed for both passive and active recreational use, as well as areas that should be preserved for natural beauty and valuable resources. The City's parks should be located in close proximity to residential areas. Preservation areas include wetlands, stream banks, bodies of water, areas of steep slope, and areas of aesthetic value.

SECTION SIX: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Recommendations for Implementing the Plan

1. Hold workshops for the City Council and Planning Board on how the Land Use Plan can be used upon adoption. These meetings can look at different aspects of the plan at each meeting.
2. Refine the staff recommendation process for all land development proposals, rezoning requests, conditional use permits, and subdivision proposals. The staff recommendation will include a short analysis of how the proposed development will meet or not meet the Land Use Plan's policies as well as the Plan's Future Land Use Map.
3. Make necessary changes to City's development regulations (i.e. zoning, subdivision, campground, etc.) to allow for the type of development desired by the community. For example, changing the City's subdivision regulations to allow conservation subdivision design or requiring undisturbed stream buffers along perennial streams.
4. Encourage the City Council and Planning Board to use the Land Use Plan on a regular basis, to serve as a helpful guideline for making decisions on rezoning requests, conditional use permits, and subdivision proposals.

Use of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map should be used as the first step in evaluating development proposals. The Future Land Use Map and the supporting information in Section Four outline appropriate locations for different types and patterns of land development. When reviewing a proposed development, the developer, staff, citizens, Planning Board and the City Council should determine first if that type of development is desired in the location that is being proposed.

Use of the Land Use Plan Principles and Policies

The principles and policies outlined in Section Four of the plan should be used as the second check in evaluating how well proposed developments are supported by the Land Use Plan. The principles and policies represent general principles that affect all development within the City. If a proposed development does not appear to be supported by these principles and policies, it should be returned to the developer for revisions.

How Can the Land Use Plan Be Used By Various Users?

To aid in the effective use of the Land Use Plan, the following examples, illustrate how different users can employ the Plan's principles and policies as well as the Future Land Use Plan Map in evaluating a rezoning request:

As Used by the Developer

The developer or property owner can petition for a rezoning request that is consistent with the City's policies, thereby increasing the chances for rezoning approval, and minimizing guess work and time wasted.

As Used by the Planning Board

Prior to their regular meeting, each Planning Board member can make his or her own determination as to the consistency of the proposed rezoning with the City's adopted principles and policies as well as the Future Land Use Map contained in the Land Use Plan. As always, the Planning Board should take into account the recommendations of the Plan, but may choose to give different weight to the different elements of the Plan along with any other mitigating factors.

As Used by the General Public

Residents of the City can and should reference specific principles and policies of the Plan when seeking a zoning change or speaking in favor of or in opposition to a rezoning request.

As Used by the City Council

In its legislative authority to rezone property, the City Council has the final word as to whether the rezoning request is consistent with the various plans and ordinances that affect the property in question. The Council should take into account and weigh the interpretation of the Plan's policies as employed by the property owner, the Planning Board, staff, and the general public. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a consistent foundation for decision-making.

Recommendations for Monitoring and Revising the Plan

As the Land Use Plan is used and development occurs in Locust, it will be necessary to make revisions to the Plan in order to keep it updated. A major development, new road or water and sewer extensions can drastically change an area of the planning jurisdiction. It is recommended that the City Planner convene a meeting of the Locust Land Use Planning Committee a minimum of every five (5) years to look at changes that need to be addressed and to provide an opportunity to monitor the City's progress in implementing the plan.

It should also be noted that City staff, the Planning Board and the City Council play a vital role in monitoring and revising the plan as well. The City of Locust Land Use Plan will only be a document worth using if it is kept up to date and used on a regular basis by the City Council, Planning Board, City staff, and the citizens of Locust.

SECTION SEVEN: EXISTING LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

City Policies

Land Development Ordinances

The City's Land Development Ordinances govern the zoning and subdivision of land. They were adopted on April 3, 1997.

A. *Zoning*

The zoning ordinance establishes seven regular zoning districts, six conditional use districts, and one overlay district.

- Open Space District (OPS): This is a residential district provided to encourage the development of compact neighborhoods and rural building groups that set aside significant natural vistas and landscape features for permanent conservation. Density of development is regulated on a sliding scale; permitted densities rise with increased open space preservation. Development typologies associated with the Open Space District are farms, single houses, farmhouse clusters, and residential neighborhoods. Mixed-use Traditional Neighborhood developments are permissible using an overlay district (TND-O). The number of housing units which may be built in a major or minor subdivision in the OPS district varies according to the amount of open space preserved. A base density of 2.0 dwelling units per acre is permitted with the preservation of 20% open space; for each 1% of open space preserved exceeding the required 20%, the number of units in the project may be increased by 1%. At least 75% of the open space counted toward the basic open space requirements and density incentive shall be set aside to maintain public views of rural heritage features. Up to 25% may be placed within the project and detailed as urban open space.
- General Residential District (GR): This district was used specifically to permit the completion and conformity of conventional residential subdivision already existing or approved in sketch plan form by the Locust Board of Commissioners prior to the effective date of the zoning ordinance. As the effective date was 1997, this is no longer an actively used zoning designation.

- Neighborhood Residential District (NR): This district provides for residential infill development surrounding the traditional City Center. Streets must be interconnected and urban open space must be provided; all developments over 10 acres in size must provide 10% of the site as public open space. Permissible uses include a range of housing types and low-intensity businesses located in mixed-use buildings. Traditional Neighborhood Development is permissible on tracts of 40 acres or more with approval of a TND-O district.
- City Center District (CC): This district provides for revitalization, reuse, and infill development in Locust's traditional City Center area. A broad array of uses is encouraged: shops, restaurants, services, work places, civic, educational, and religious facilities, and higher density housing. First floor spaces should be reserved for retail uses, with office and residential uses occupying additional floors.
- Highway Commercial District (HC): This district provides for auto-dependent uses in areas less amenable to pedestrian access. Because of the scale and access requirements of uses in this category, they often cannot be compatibly integrated within the City Center District.
- Campus Business and Institutional District (CBI): This district provides for large business or light industrial parks and institutional complexes which are already in place and for new developments of these uses on 15 acres or more which, because of the scale of the buildings or the nature of the activity, cannot be fully integrated into the fabric of the community. Uses in this district are generally buffered from neighboring properties.
- Mobile Home District (MH): This non-active district provides for existing neighborhoods which include mobile homes. Mobile homes within this district must abide by a number of design standards.
- Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District (TND-O): This overlay district provides for new neighborhoods and revitalized old neighborhoods structured upon Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) design standards, including interconnected streets, pedestrian oriented features, and public spaces. This district allows for a mixture of housing types and prices, prominently sited civic or community buildings, and a balanced mix of activities. The TND overlay district can only be

applied in the Neighborhood Residential district, on a site of 40 acres or more, and in the Open Space district, on a site of 65 acres or more. The TND overlay district is limited to a maximum size of 200 acres.

Each district, excepting the Mobile Home (MH) district, has a parallel corresponding conditional district. Conditional districts provide for situations where a particular use may be appropriate for a particular site but the general district has insufficient standards to mitigate the site specific impact on surrounding areas. Uses which may be considered for a conditional use district are restricted to those uses permitted in the corresponding general zoning district. Conditional use districts are established on an individual basis, at the request of the property owner. The Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay (TND-O) district may only be applied in conjunction with another zoning district. It may grant additional uses, restrict permitted uses, or impose development requirements which differ from those of the underlying district. The underlying district and the overlay district, taken together, will control development.

B. Subdivision

The subdivision ordinance addresses procedures for submitting plats for approval and provides minimum design standards for development. The ordinance applies to every subdivision of tracts of land into smaller parcels within the corporate limits of the City of Locust, except for those involving the combination or recombination of parcels platted and recorded prior to the effective date of the ordinance; the division of land into parcels greater than five acres where street right-of-way dedication is not involved; the division of a tract in single ownership whose entire area is no greater than two acres into not more than three lots; and the creation of strips of land for the widening of streets or rights-of-way, among others.

Subdivisions are classified as either a major or minor subdivision. Major subdivisions involve any of the following characteristics: the creation of any new public street or right-of-way or improvements to an existing street; the site of a future public school, park, or open space shown in an official adopted policy; the extension of a right-of-way or easement for the City's water and sewer system; the installation of drainage improvements through one or more lots; and the installation of a private wastewater treatment plant or water supply system for more than one lot or building site. A minor subdivision does not involve any of these characteristics and is exempt from subdivision provisions.

Source: City of Locust Land Development Ordinance

City Development Plans

Locust Town Center Charrette

While NC Highway 24/27 and NC Highway 200 have long served as the major commercial corridors in Locust, a true city center did not exist. Main Street Properties, Inc., private local developers, conceived of a true urbanist model to create this important center of commerce and public life and purchased a 125 acre site situated at the crossroads of the two highways. Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company were hired to facilitate a week-long design charrette involving local residents, public servants, business and civic leaders, engineers, and architects. This charrette was held from May 18-25, 2004 and resulted in a charrette booklet containing the vision and plans for Locust's Town Center.

The Town Center was planned as a traditional neighborhood development and is composed of elements supporting a fully integrated, walkable area. At the core of the plan is the center, a relatively dense concentration of mixed-use buildings that front a small village green, dubbed 'Merchant Square'. This square marks the intersection between the newly created 'Main Street' and the existing highway development. The center will be a prime area for commerce, containing a mix of small shops, commercial buildings, and eating establishments, and will create important opportunities to incubate new businesses. These commercial buildings will front the square, with public parking lots located behind and hidden from view. Architectural features include deep arcades and porches that can span the entire length of the sidewalks; restaurants and cafes could utilize this area to provide outdoor seating, thus contributing to the vitality of street life. Civic uses are also an important part of the center's makeup and are prominently placed around the 'Common' a large, formal public green intended to serve as the primary social gathering space. Living space is also included in the center, in the form of live/work office units, townhouses, and apartments.

Surrounding the center is a neighborhood of less dense residential uses of varying sizes, ranging from traditional single-family houses, cottages, sideyard houses (single-family houses occupying one side of the lot, with the yard located on the other side), townhouses, and apartments. Housing is all located within easy walking distance of the amenities located in the center. Streets are narrow and lined with trees and houses sit close to the street, with garages and private backyards located behind. Smaller neighborhood greens are interspersed throughout, connected through a system of greenways and pedestrian paths, accommodating bikers and pedestrians alike.

The edge of the development is characterized by traditional single-family housing and mansions, houses located on large lots and characterized by a rural nature. This portion of the site is located in a largely wooded area and tree preservation is encouraged, providing for more private, screened lots.

The Town Center design was based on several successful elements of Traditional Neighborhood Design, including:

- A discernible town center
- Dwellings located within a 5 minute walk of the town center
- Features a variety of dwelling types
- Features shops and offices
- Allows for small ancillary buildings in the backyard of each house, to serve as a rental unit or workspace
- In proximity to an elementary school (within 1/8 mile) so children can walk to school
- Features small playgrounds
- Streets are a connected network, allowing for safe and easy travel
- Residential streets are narrow and shaded by rows of trees
- Buildings are placed close to the street to create a sense of place
- Parking lots and garages are located in the rear of buildings, accessed by alleys
- Prominent sites, at the termination of street vistas or at the center, are reserved for civic buildings
- Designed to be a self-governing neighborhood

The Town Center was designed to be self-governing, through an official Town Center Code, administered by the Town Architect. The code is a transect-based document, in that its requirements vary depending on the location of the property and consists of four documents (Regulating Plan, Urban Standards, Architectural Standards, and Thoroughfare Standards). The Regulating Plan acts a zoning map, controlling the distribution of the transects throughout the site. These transects are akin to zoning districts and consist of the following designations: Urban Center, General Urban, and Sub-Urban. The Urban Standards regulate physical requirements, such as lot size, setbacks, building type, frontage type, height, and function, for each of the designations. The Architectural Standards attempt to control the quality (and to a lesser extent, the style) of construction of private buildings. They describe desired standards for building walls, attachment, roofs, and openings in terms of their materials and configurations. The Thoroughfare Standards describe the design principles for each of the different street types located in the Center, regulating allowed locations of street parking and providing engineering standards for speed.

When fully built out, the Town Center will encompass a 1320 foot radius, including both sides of a portion of Highway 24/27 and extending to Highway 200. It will contain seven neighborhood blocks, 149,100 feet of retail space, 9,225 feet of civic space, a 26,675 foot Farmer's Market, and abundant areas of open space (plazas, squares, playgrounds, greens, greenways, etc.).

Source: Charette Booklet, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.

Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan

The City of Locust was awarded a planning grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation to develop a Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan in 2009. The plan was completed in 2010 and encompasses the following goals and objectives.

1. To promote pedestrian safety
 - Police/School Safety Program
 - Initiate “Safe Routes to School” program
 - Identify and install pedestrian crosswalks
 - Identify and install safe crossing routes to Locust Elementary School
2. To encourage healthy lifestyles through walking
 - Develop walking programs with City Parks and Recreation
 - Develop healthy lifestyles programs with County Health Department
 - Initiate statewide programs such as “Eat Less, Walk More North Carolina”
3. To create a pedestrian network that connects destinations throughout the City
 - Overcome division of City by US Highway 24/27 by creating safe crossing areas
 - Develop network centered on connections to Town Center
 - Create safe crossing areas for NC Highway 200
 - Identify and provide for connections to important pedestrian destinations
4. To provide a convenient, alternate mode of transportation
 - Encourage walking as an alternative to vehicular travel
 - Reduce dependence upon automobiles for short trips
5. To create an attractive pedestrian atmosphere that enhances the City’s image
 - Create pleasant walking areas with introduction of shade trees and landscaping
 - Create areas for sitting, gathering, and relaxing along pedestrian thoroughfares
6. To promote efficient and cost effective measures in developing the network
 - Identify sources of funding for pedestrian improvements
 - Work with NCDOT to fund enhancements of the transportation system to include pedestrian facilities
7. To provide a variety of pedestrian pathways
 - Provide pathways for transportation alternatives
 - Provide pathways suitable for recreation or exercise opportunities
8. To assure accessibility to all physically, economically, and ethnically challenged populations
 - Ensure compliance of all pedestrian facilities with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Provide equitable access to pedestrian facilities for all neighborhoods

The Plan’s recommendations include:

- Increase connectivity from residential to destination areas

- Improve existing conditions and expansion of the pedestrian system into City Center.
- Improve and repair existing non-compliant ADA pedestrian facilities
- Implement safe conditions for pedestrians at dangerous conditions
- Future development should be taken into consideration in regards to pedestrian facilities
- Connectivity of pedestrian facilities where gaps and barriers exist

Recommended infrastructure includes crosswalks, pedestrian signals, sidewalks, greenways, landscaping along NC Highway 24/27, traffic signals, and raised and planted medians on NC Highway 24/27.

1. Crosswalk, pedestrian signals, and traffic signals

A. Intersection Improvements

- NC 24/27 and Office Jeff Shelton Drive (Locust Elementary)
- NC 24/27 and Renee Ford Road
- NC 24/27 and Ray Kennedy Drive (City Center entrance)
- NC 24/27 and Stanly Parkway
- NC 24/27 and Vella Drive
- Hwy 200N and Bethel Church Rd/Meadow Creek Church Rd.
- NC 24/27 and Browns Hill Rd.

B. Spot Improvements

- NC 24/27 and Church St.
- *NC 24/27 and NC Hwy 200*
- *NC Hwy 200 N and Lions Club Drive*
- Scout Road and Meadow Creek Church Road
- Scout Road and Reed Mine Road
- Montclair Drive and Meadow Creek Church Road

2. Sidewalks

- NC 200 N at NC 24/27 to Bethel Church Road
- NC 200 S at NC 24/27 to E. Sunset Dr.
- Market Street from City Center to 200 N
- Bethel Church Road at Christy Lane to 200 N
- Smith Street to 200 N
- Lions Club Drive from 200 N to Locust City Park
- Meadow Creek Church Road at 24/27 to Old Hickory Road
- Stanly Parkway at NC 24/27 to Wal-Mart Retail Center
- Redah Drive
- Church Street
- Browns Hill Road at Nance Road to NC 24/27

3. Greenways

- Scout Road to Meadow Creek Church Road

- Scout Road to Reed Mine Road
- From Locust City Center to proposed Locust Greenway Loop
- Corner of Dogwood/Smith to proposed Locust Greenway Loop
- Old Hickory Road to proposed Locust Greenway Loop
- Walnut Creek Road to proposed Locust Greenway Loop
- Montclair Drive to proposed Locust Greenway Loop

Source: Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, McGill Associates

State and Regional Plans

Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) conducted a joint transportation planning effort with the City of Locust and Town of Stanfield in 2004; the resulting transportation plan supersedes the previous City of Locust Transportation Plan from 1985. The 2004 plan has been updated through April 2013 and reflects plans for a potential bypass in the region.

The plan studied the area's needs for highways, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and amenities and contains recommendations for each element. The primary objective of the plan is to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety by eliminating existing and projected deficiencies in the transportation system.

A. *Highways*

The highway plan looked at five categories of roadways: freeways, expressways, boulevards, other major thoroughfares, and other minor thoroughfares. The following observations and recommendations were made:

- NC Highway 200 (boulevard): Widening the roadway to NCDOT standards and widening the existing bridges is recommended to accommodate projected growth and increased traffic demand, providing for an improved southern entrance to Locust and Stanfield.
- Reed Mine Trail (minor thoroughfare): Extending the roadway will connect Meadow Creek Church Road to Highway 24/27 and the proposed new location of Browns Hill Road and alleviate traffic congestion. It will also provide for an alternate route around Locust for traffic on Highway 24/27 and Highway 200. Widening the road to NCDOT standards is also recommended.

- Browns Hill Road (minor thoroughfare): Widening the roadway to NCDOT standards and improving the sight distance in the western direction is recommended to improve safety and enable trucks to enter and exit the industrial park without traveling on other roads.
- Scout Road (minor thoroughfare): Extending the roadway will provide access to Meadow Creek Church Road and the proposed Reed Mine Trail extension. Widening the roadway to NCDOT standards is also recommended.
- Sunset Lake Road (minor thoroughfare): Extending the roadway will provide an alternate route to Harvell Road, eliminating travel and further congestion on Highway 200. Widening the roadway to NCDOT standards is also recommended.
- Oak Grove Road (minor thoroughfare): Extending the roadway will provide a connection from Highway 200 to Love Mill Road, enabling traffic to utilize Oak Grove Road as an east-west bypass. Widening the roadway to NCDOT standards is also recommended.
- Widening projects: Widening projects were recommended on the following roadways to improve safety and capacity: Coley Store Road, Elm Street, Loves Mill Road, Bethel Church Road, Meadow Creek Church Road, West Stanly Street, Big Lick Road, Renee Ford Road, Nance Road, River Road, and Pine Bluff Road.
- Sight distance improvements: Improvements were recommended at the following intersections to provide better sight distance and increase safety: Loves Chapel Road and NC 200, Coley Store Road and Bethel Church Road, Browns Hill Road and NC 24/27, Harvell Road and NC 200, and Charlotte Street and NC 200.
- Local improvements: Improvements to the following local roads to improve traffic flow and provide connectivity was recommended: Deerwood Drive (extension to Sunset Lake Road), Montclair Drive (extension to Market Street), Lions Club Road (extension to Park Drive), Park Avenue (extension to Vella Drive), and Columbus Street (extension to Vella Drive).

B. Public Transportation

Public transportation offers alternatives to the traditional trend of vehicular travel. Locust is currently able to access public transportation services offered by Stanly County Senior Services and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP). General public passengers are also able to utilize these

services. To enhance and expand these offerings, the following recommendation was made:

- Park and Ride Lot: A park and ride lot, located on Highway 24/27 between Browns Hill Road and Meadow Creek Church Road, is recommended to relieve increasing congestion through the promotion of carpools, vanpools, bicycling, and walking.

C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel

Bicycle and pedestrian improvements encompass both on-road and off-road facilities.

- Meadow Creek Church/Bethel Church Road: Adding a four foot shoulder to the roadway for bicyclists to utilize is recommended.
- Renee Ford Road: Adding a four foot shoulder to the roadway for bicyclists to utilize is recommended.
- West Stanly Street and Big Lick Road: Adding a four foot shoulder to the roadway for bicyclists to utilize is recommended.
- Park and Ride Path: An off-road bicycle path linking the proposed park and ride lot and Meadow Creek Church Road is recommended.
- Simpson Road Facility: An off-road bicycle path providing cyclists another entrance into Stanfield from Locust and connecting Church Street, Simpson Road, and Willow Creek Road is recommended.
- Rock Hole Creek Path: An off-road bicycle path providing access to Loves Chapel Road, East Prong Rock Hole Creek, Polk Ford Road, the elementary school, and the city park is recommended.

Source: Comprehensive Transportation Plan, NCDOT

SECTION EIGHT: LOCUST COMMUNITY PROFILE

The development of a Land Use Plan requires that analysis of certain key growth factors be performed. The intent of the analysis is to ensure that policies contained in the Plan address current problems, trends, and issues facing the planning area. The key growth factors included for analysis are discussed in several subject areas within the Plan. Collectively, these key growth factors summarize past and present conditions, while providing the essential yardsticks for estimating future conditions in the planning area.

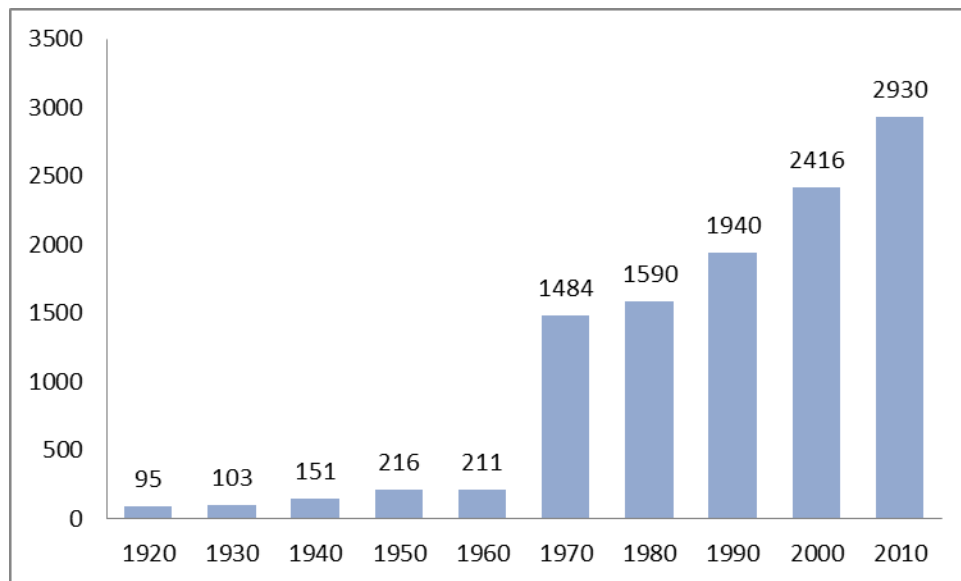
I. Population

A. Population Growth

Historic population data from the United States Census Bureau shows a fairly continual growth rate throughout the last century with a notable increase between 1960 and 1970, due to three large new subdivisions built at that time (Western Hills, Barbara Ann Park, and King's Heights).

As of 2010, the City's population was 2930. With the City covering approximately 5.1 square miles, this translates to approximately 574 people per square mile.

Figure 2.1: City of Locust Population (1920-2010)



Source: US Census Bureau

B. Population Projections

It is difficult to project the population of any planning area due to the unpredictability of potential annexations. However, two projection methods will be utilized, taking

into account the individual percentage and population increases and decreases between decades from 1960 to 2010.

The first projection, utilizes the geometric projection method. This projection method is based on previous percentage increases in population from prior censuses. The base percentage increase for this projection was derived by adding the percentage increases or decreases together for each census between 1970 and 2010 and dividing the resulting by 4 (the number of data points). The resulting number was then used to estimate the 2020, 2030, and 2040 populations.

The second projection was made utilizing the arithmetic projection method. This projection method utilizes the average total number increase in population over a given time period to estimate future population. The base number used in this projection was derived by adding the total increase or decrease in population from each census between 1970 and 2010 and dividing the resulting number by 4 (the number of data points). The resulting number was then used to estimate the 2020, 2030, and 2040 populations.

Table 2.2: Locust Population Projections (2020-2040)

Year	Geometric Projection	Arithmetic Projection
2010 (Actual)	2930	2930
2020	3311	3292
2030	3741	3652
2040	4227	4014
Growth Total	1297	1084

Source: US Census Bureau

These estimates are merely projections, based on past trends, and vary greatly due to dependent factors. The Geometric and Arithmetic Projection methods show conservative population growth levels, based entirely on past trends in the City's growth. This conservative estimate is likely to occur if current development restrictions, including utility extension issues and unsuitable soils, cannot be overcome. In reality, the actual population of the City of Locust may vary from these projections based on numerous dependent factors such as annexation, job creation or loss, and development policy decisions.

C. Population Characteristics

1. Diversity

Figures from the 2010 United States Census show that the vast majority of citizens (99.2%) in Locust reported origins in only one race; the majority of these citizens (93.5%) are Caucasian (White). Regarding citizens of other races, the majority (2.6%) reported origins in some other race, followed closely by the African American population (2.3%). The percentages of citizens of Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and mixed ancestry were all under 1%. Citizens of Hispanic or Latino heritage are calculated separately and total 6% of the population.

Table 2.3: Locust Population by Race

Race	Percentage of Total Population
Caucasian (White)	93.5
African American	2.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1
Asian	0.7
Some Other Race	2.6
Two or More Races	0.8
Total	100
Hispanic or Latino origins	6
Non-Hispanic or Latino	94
Total	100

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

2. Age Groups

Locust's population is spread out fairly proportionately among the different age groups. Those age groups with the largest percentages are the 45-49 (8.6%) and 50-54 (7.6%) ranges, typical prime working ages. Percentages in the 35-39, 40-44, and 55-59 ranges, also indicative of typical workforce ages, are also well represented, along with high percentages in the 10-14 range, showing the potential for emerging new leaders and the in the 25-29 range, suggesting that there are graduates returning to the city to work and live.

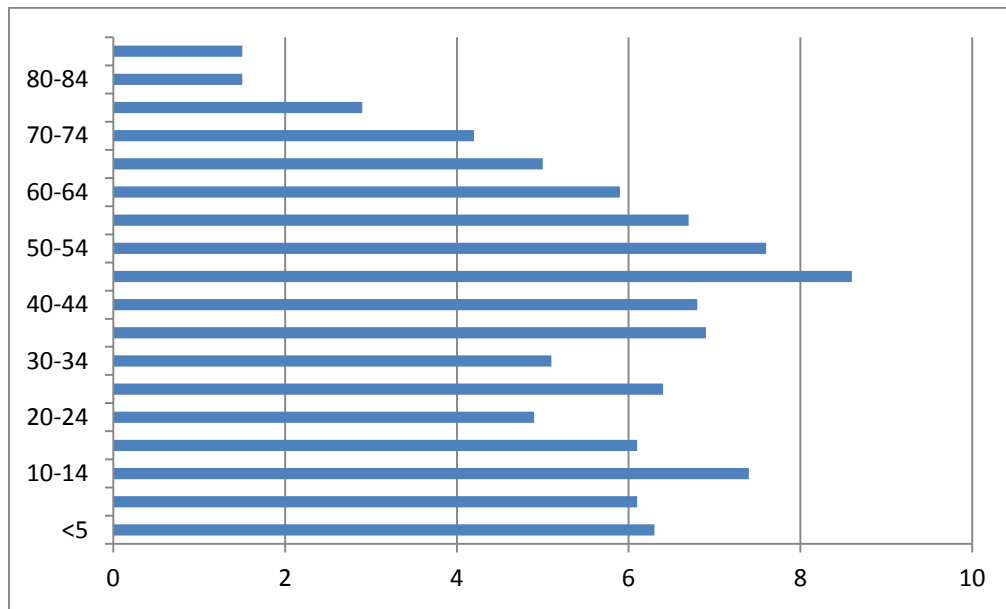
Median age is defined by the United States Census Bureau as the measure that divides the age distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median value and one-half of the cases falling above the median value. As of the 2010 Census, the median age in Locust was 40.5 years.

Table 2.4: Locust Population by Age

Age	Population	Percentage of Total Population
<5	186	6.3
5-9	179	6.1
10-14	217	7.4
15-19	179	6.1
20-24	144	4.9
25-29	188	6.4
30-34	150	5.1
35-39	201	6.9
40-44	199	6.8
45-49	251	8.6
50-54	223	7.6
55-59	195	6.7
60-64	172	5.9
65-69	147	5.0
70-74	124	4.2
75-79	85	2.9
80-84	45	1.5
>85	45	1.5
Total	2930	100

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Figure 2.2: Locust Age Distribution



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

II. Housing

A. Homeownership

As of 2010, the City of Locust had a stock of 1271 housing units, the majority (89.5%) of which were occupied. The majority (81.6%) of these units are owner-occupied. The vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing was 5.1% while the rental unit vacancy rate was 5.9%.

Table 2.5: Occupancy Rates

Occupancy	Number	Percentage
Occupied	1137	89.5
Vacant	134	10.5
Occupancy Type	Number	Percentage
Owner-Occupied	928	81.6
Renter-Occupied	209	18.4

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Census

A look at home values in the city show the majority (31.1%) fall within the \$150,000-\$199,999 range, followed closely by the \$100,000-\$149,999 (22.2%) and \$200,000-\$299,000 (21.3%) ranges.

Table 2.6: Locust Housing Values

House Value	Number of Structures	% of Total Structures
<\$50,000	39	3.6
\$50,000-\$99,999	182	16.8
\$100,000-\$149,999	240	22.2
\$150,000-\$199,999	337	31.1
\$200,000-\$299,999	231	21.3
\$300,000-\$499,999	35	3.2
\$500,000-\$999,999	12	1.1
\$1,000,000 or more	7	0.6

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

B. Housing Stock

There was a total of 1,450 housing structures, as estimated by the 2005-2011 American Community Survey. The majority (16.7%) were built between 1960 and 1969, which correlates to the City's population history, with the population dramatically rising following the construction of three large subdivisions (Western Hills, Barbara Ann Park, and King's Heights). Subdivisions have continued to be

built at a fairly steady rate since that time, resulting in a stable rate of population growth.

Table 2.7: Locust Housing Stock

Year Built	Number of Structures	% of Total Structures
Built 2005 or later	157	10.8
Built 2000 to 2004	191	13.2
Built 1990 to 1999	235	16.2
Built 1980 to 1989	186	12.8
Built 1970 to 1979	153	10.6
Built 1960 to 1969	242	16.7
Built 1950 to 1959	189	13
Built 1940 to 1949	74	5.1
Built 1939 or earlier	23	1.6

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

The majority of the city's housing stock (87%) is single family homes, with much smaller percentages of multi-family and manufactured housing.

Table 2.8: Locust Housing By Type

Housing Type	Number of Structures	% of Total Structure Built
Single-Family	1261	87
Multi-Family	91	6.2
Manufactured Housing	98	6.8

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

III. Economy

A. Income

1. Type of Income

The majority of households (79%) in Locust rely on the regular wages and earnings of the main contributor/contributors. The mean, or average, value of such earnings calculates to \$66,979 per year. A significant number of households (26.6%) rely on social security income as their primary source of subsistence, although the mean value is only \$17,197 per year. Another large number of households (17.8%) draw retirement benefits, which average out to a mean value of \$13,919 per year. A small number of households earn supplemental security income and public assistance funds.

Table 3.1: Locust Income by Type

Income Type	Number of People	% of Total Population	Mean Value (per year)
Earnings	950	79	\$66,979
Social Security	320	26.6	\$17,197
Supplemental Security	42	3.5	\$8,338
Public Assistance	19	1.6	\$747
Retirement	214	17.8	\$13,919

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

2. Household Income

Household income calculations include the income of the main householder and all other individuals aged 15 years and older in the household. Because many households consist of only one (1) person, average household income is usually less than average family income. When analyzing the distribution of household income in Locust, most households (22.4%) fall into the \$75,000-\$99,999 range, followed closely by the \$50,000-\$74,999 range (22%).

Median household income divides the income distribution into two parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half of the cases falling above the median. For households, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households, including those with no income. The median household income is \$58,719 per year.

Table 3.2: Locust Household Income by Range

Income Range	Number of Households	% of Total Population
<\$10,000	112	9.3
\$10,000-\$14,999	54	4.5
\$15,000-\$24,999	37	3.1
\$25,000-\$34,999	129	10.7
\$35,000-\$49,999	172	14.3
\$50,000-\$74,999	265	22
\$75,000-\$99,999	270	22.4
\$100,000-\$149,999	103	8.6
\$150,000-\$199,999	23	1.9
\$200,000 or more	38	3.2

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

3. Family Income

In compiling statistics on family income, the incomes of all members aged 15 years and older are summed and treated as a single amount. The figures for

family income in Locust are very similar to the figures and trends for household income. The majority of families (28.9%) fall into the \$75,000-\$99,999 range, followed closely by the \$50,000-\$74,999 range (22.5%).

Median family income divides the income distribution into two parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half of the cases falling above the median. For families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of families, including those with no income. The median family income in Locust is \$72,796 per year.

Table 3.3: Locust Family Income by Range

Income Range	Number of Families	% of Total Population
<\$10,000	33	3.6
\$10,000-\$14,999	10	1.1
\$15,000-\$24,999	26	2.9
\$25,000-\$34,999	80	8.8
\$35,000-\$49,999	135	14.8
\$50,000-\$74,999	205	22.5
\$75,000-\$99,999	263	28.9
\$100,000-\$149,999	98	10.8
\$150,000-\$199,999	23	2.5
\$200,000 or more	38	4.2

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

4. Per Capita Income

Per capita income is the mean income for every man, woman, and child in a particular group. It is derived by dividing the total income of a particular group by the total population in that group. As compared to Cabarrus County and Stanly County (the two counties in which the City of Locust lies) and the State of North Carolina, Locust has a higher median household income and median family income than the others. Locust's per capita income is slightly higher than the counties and statewide figure as well.

Table 3.4: Per Capita Income Comparison

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income
Locust	\$58,719	\$72,796	\$26,986
Cabarrus County	\$54,280	\$66,290	\$25,898
Stanly County	\$43,424	\$57,086	\$20,868

State of NC	\$46,291	\$57,171	\$25,256
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Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

B. Poverty Rates

Poverty rates in Locust are fairly low, well under the rates seen in Cabarrus County and Stanly County as well as the statewide figure.

Table 3.5: Poverty Level Comparison

Jurisdiction	% of Individuals under Poverty Level	% of Families under Poverty Level
Locust	5.2	3.6
Cabarrus County	11.9	9.1
Stanly County	14.1	8.8
State of NC	16.1	11.8

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

C. Education

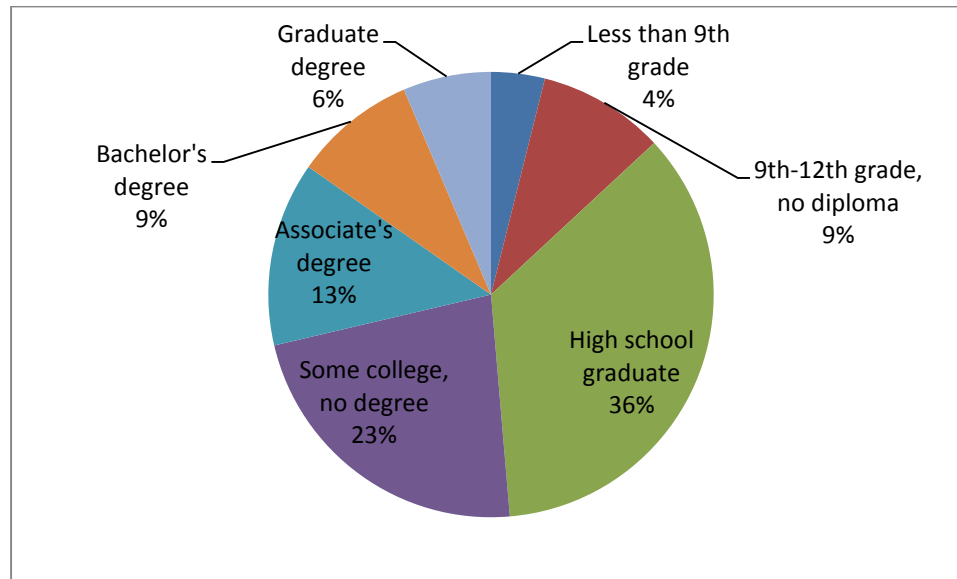
Among citizens that are 25 years and older, the City of Locust has a lower percentage of citizens without a high school diploma when compared to Cabarrus County, Stanly County, and the State of North Carolina. The City is directly in line with the counties and the state on averages for citizens with a high school degree, some college, and a college degree, although it falls slightly below Cabarrus County and Stanly County on college graduates (includes Associates, Bachelors, Graduate, and Doctorate degrees).

**Table 3.6: Educational Attainment Comparison
(Population Aged 25 and over)**

Jurisdiction	% Without High School Diploma	% High School Graduate	% With Some College	% With College Degree
Locust	13.1	35.6	22.7	28.7
Cabarrus County	14.5	27.8	23.5	35.1
Stanly County	20.4	35.3	20.4	34.2
State of NC	15.9	27.7	21.4	23.8

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

Figure 3.1: Locust Educational Attainment



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2011

IV. Workforce

A. Employment

The majority (38.4%) of Locust's workforce are employed in the Management and Professional sector, including occupations in business, science, and the arts. This is closely followed by citizens engaged in sales and office occupations (29.4%), likely due to the city's proximity to the Charlotte metropolitan area, a regional center for banking in North Carolina.

Table 3.7: Locust Employment by Sector

Occupation	Number of People	% of Total Population
Management, Professional	583	38.4
Service Occupations	162	10.7
Sales and Office Occupations	446	29.4
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	141	9.3
Production, Transportation	186	12.3

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

The vast majority (83%) of Locust's citizens in the workforce are private wage and salary workers. Percentages of government workers (9.1%) and self-employed workers (7.3%) are comparable. A small amount (0.6%) of the city's residents are unpaid family workers.

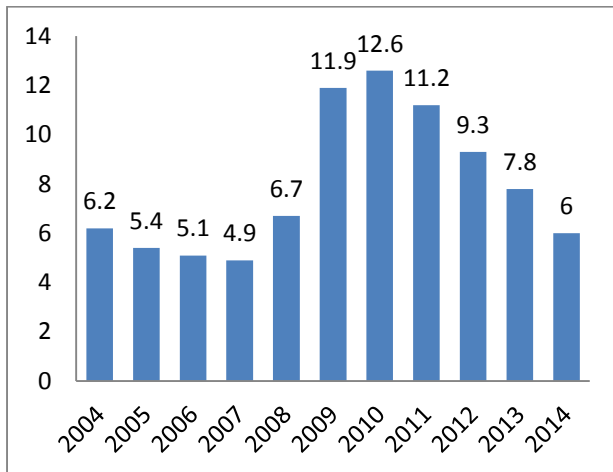
Table 3.8: Locust Workforce by Type

Type of Worker	Number of Workers	% of Total Employed
Private Wage and Salary Workers	1260	83
Government Workers	138	9.1
Self-Employed Workers	111	7.3
Unpaid Family Workers	9	0.6

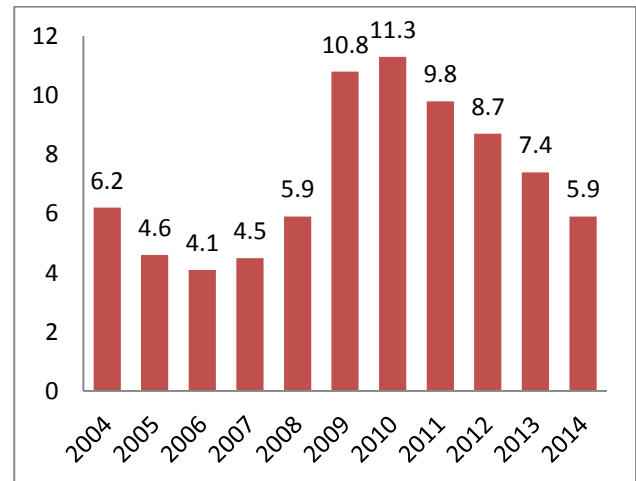
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

B. Unemployment

Unemployment figures are not generated for the City of Locust so data must be inferred from the figures for Cabarrus and Stanly County. Figures for each county have followed a similar trajectory, peaking during the recent economic downturn and only dropping back to pre-2008 figures within the last year.



Stanly County Unemployment Rate, 2004-2014



Cabarrus County Unemployment Rate, 2004-2014

Source: NC Employment Security Commission

C. Commuting Patterns

Many of the citizens in Locust work in the Charlotte metropolitan region, which is a short drive away or in one of the many nearby towns and cities. Regardless of where they work, the majority of citizens in the workforce (89.2%) drive their personal car to work. A conservative number of these workers (9.5%) carpool with coworkers and neighbors. As there is no public transportation service that extends to the city and most of the citizens' workplaces are not within walking distance, these are not viable options of transportation.

Table 3.10: Locust Method of Transportation

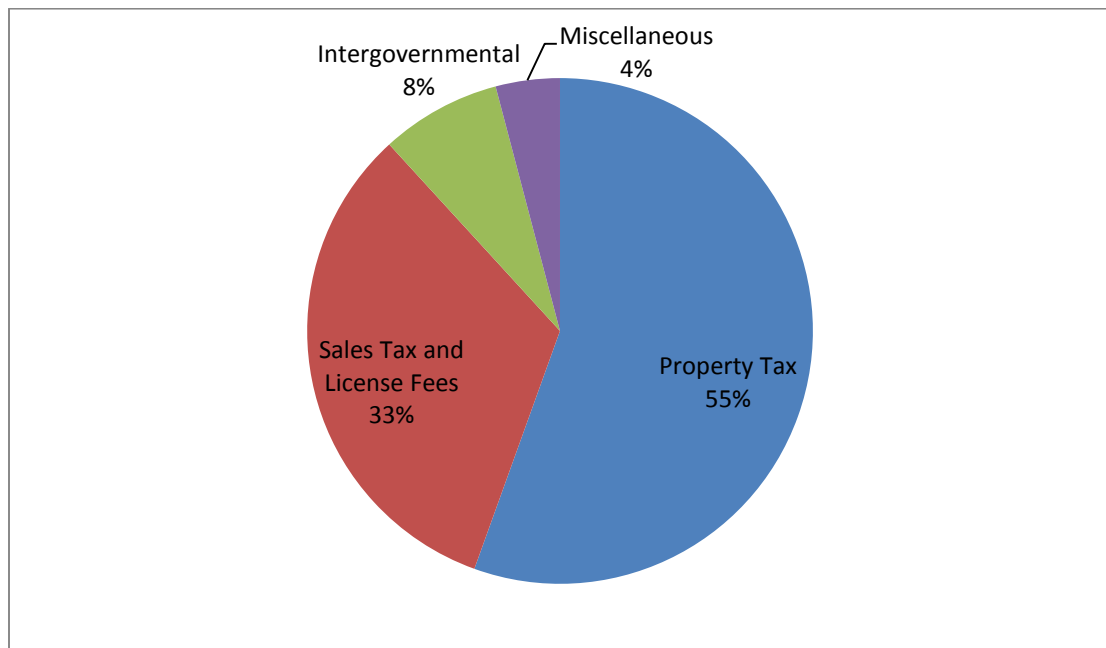
Transportation Method	% of All Workers
Drive Alone	89.2
Carpool	9.5
Public Transportation	0
Walk	1
Work at Home	0.4

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

V. Financial Outlook

A. Revenues

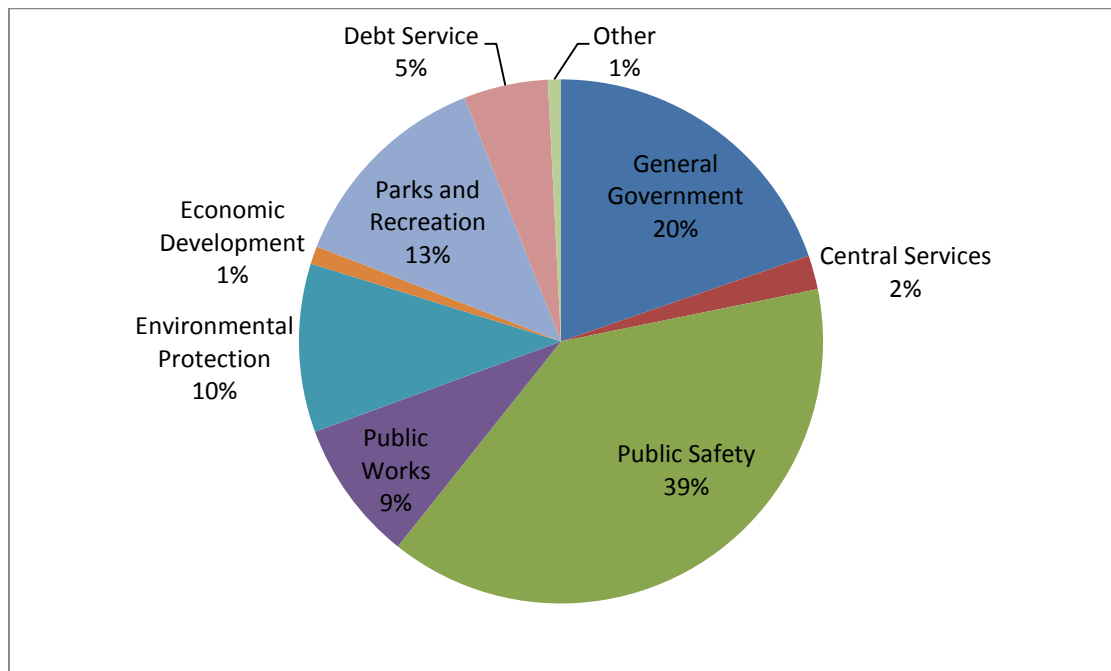
For fiscal year 2013-2014, the City estimates revenues in excess of two million dollars (\$2,269,600) in its General Fund. The Powell Bill fund revenue is estimated at \$101,400 and the Wastewater System fund revenue is estimated at \$966,550. The majority (55%) of Locust's revenue stream comes from property and vehicle taxes (\$1,260,000). The second largest category of revenue (33%) comes from sales taxes and license fees (\$742,000) followed by intergovernmental transfers, comprised of utility franchise taxes, court fees, and beer and wine taxes, at 8% (\$173,500) and miscellaneous sources, such as interest, park fees, building rentals, and concession revenues, at 4% (\$94,100).



Source: City of Locust Budget 2013-2014

B. Expenditures

Estimated expenditures in the General Fund for fiscal year 2013-2014 also amount to \$2,269,600, to provide for a balanced budget. Public Safety comprises the majority (39%) of expenditures, accounting for \$882,650. The next largest category of expenditures is General Government (20% or \$446,800), followed by Parks and Recreation (13% or \$295,350), Environmental Protection (10% or \$235,000), and Public Works (9% or \$198,100). Expenditure categories making up a smaller percentage of the total include Debt Service (5%), Central Services (2%), Economic Development (1%), and Other (1%) which comprises transfers to the waste water fund and the capital project fund. The City maintains separate accounts for the Powell Fund (\$101,400), Wastewater Operating Fund (\$149,150), and Waste Collection and Treatment Fund (\$326,900).



Source: City of Locust Budget 2013-2014

VI. Infrastructure

A. Public Utilities

The City of Locust purchases water from Stanly County.

The City owns and operates its own sewer system, with sewage treated at Oakboro's treatment plant. The system was built in 1998 and consists of 40 miles of PVC pipe, ranging in size from 4 to 12 inches. The Oakboro treatment plant

has a capacity of 900,000 gallons per day but is currently only treating around 140,000 gallons per day. Approximately 73% of the City's residents are connected to the municipal sewer system; the remainder of the population relies upon septic tanks. The City maintains a sewer line extension policy and a Capital Improvements Program plan and budget for the sewer system.

B. Transportation Systems

Locust has two major highways running through its town limits: NC Highway 24/27 running east-west with access to Charlotte and NC Highway 200 running north-south.

Public transportation is available through Stanly County SCUSA. Appointments can be made between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

C. Public Safety

Fire protection is provided by the Locust Volunteer Fire Department, which serves the west Stanly area, including the town of Stanfield.



Police protection is provided by the City's police department. The force consists of a Police Chief, Assistant Chief, 2 sergeants, 8 patrol officers on 2 rotations, 2 reserve officers, and a records manager.

D. School System

Locust is served by the Stanly County Public School System. Locust Elementary school is the only public school within the town limits, although the private Carolina Christian School serves grades K-12. Public middle and high school students attend West Stanly Middle School and West Stanly High School.

Stanly Community College has a local campus in Locust, concentrating mainly on health care curriculum. There are several additional community colleges and universities within the vicinity of Locust: Cabarrus College of Health Sciences (Cabarrus County); Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Catawba College, Livingstone College (Rowan County); University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Central Piedmont Community College, Davidson College, Johnson C. Smith University, Queens University of Charlotte (Mecklenburg County); and Stanly Community College, Pfeiffer University (Stanly County).



VII. Natural Resources

A. Water Features

1. Hydrology

Locust lies within the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin. The Yadkin River's headwaters are located in northwestern North Carolina and southern Virginia; it flows southeast across North Carolina, eventually merging with the Uwharrie River to become the Pee Dee River. The Pee Dee River ultimately empties into the Atlantic Ocean near Myrtle Beach in South Carolina. The North Carolina portion of the basin comprises about 50% of the total area and includes portions of 21 counties and 93 municipalities.

River basins are divided into smaller sub-basins. Locust is located in three different sub-basins: 03-07-12, 03-07-13, and 03-07-14. The majority of the city lies within sub-basin 03-07-12, which is dominated by the Rocky River, Dutch Buffalo Creek, Irish Buffalo Creek, Goose Creek, and Crooked Creek. Dutch Buffalo Creek originates in the northern section of the sub-basin and flows into the Rocky River, near the northeastern section of the planning

study area, forming the Rocky River watershed. The Rocky River is the largest water body in the planning study area and passes through the eastern boundary of the town limits. The Rocky River watershed is not classified as a public water supply watershed and therefore not subject to any development restrictions under state water supply regulations. A small portion of the northeastern section of the city is in sub-basin 03-07-13, which is characterized by Long Creek and its tributaries Little Long Creek and Big Bear Creek. A portion of the southeastern section of the city lies in sub-basin 03-07-14, which is characterized by Richardson Creek and Lanes Creek.

Several smaller streams and stream branches also flow through the land use planning area. These include Caldwell Creek, Bost Creek Muddy Creek, Clear Creek, Big Meadow Creek, Little Meadow Creek, Anderson Creek, Hamby Branch, Far Branch, Horton Branch, Wiley Branch, and several small unnamed tributaries.

Source: NCDENR, Division of Water Quality

2. Water Quality

All of the rivers, streams, and stream branches within the land use planning area are Class C waters. According to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ), these are: *“Waters protected for secondary recreation, fishing, wildlife, fish and aquatic life propagation and survival, agriculture, and other uses suitable for Class C.”* Secondary recreation includes wading, boating, and other uses involving human contact with water where such activities take place in an infrequent, unorganized, or incidental manner. There are no restrictions on watershed development or types of discharges, provided state water quality standards are met.

A 7.5 mile section of the Rocky River flowing to the west of the City limits is an impaired water listed on the State’s 303(d) report, tabulated in 2012. Water ratings are determined from analysis of data collected by a network of ambient and benthic water quality monitoring stations. Ambient water quality monitoring stations record such data as water temperature, specific conductance, turbidity, total suspended residue, dissolved oxygen, metals, fecal coliform, and weather conditions. The Rocky River segment was listed as impaired for exceeding fecal coliform (affecting recreation) and turbidity (affecting aquatic life). Benthic stations monitor the health of benthic macroinvertebrates and the fish community within the ecosystem. While the fish community was listed as supporting, with a ‘Good’ bioclassification, the

river segment was listed as impaired, with only a 'Fair' bioclassification for benthic macroinvertebrates.

Source: NCDENR Division of Water Quality

3. Water Features

The land use planning area contains a small number of isolated floodplains, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Area (FEMA). Future development on these sites will be restricted by the City's Floodplain Management program and the resultant policies.

Wetlands in the rea consist mainly of freshwater ponds scattered around the land use planning area. Freshwater wetlands are part of the Palustrine system, which are non-tidal wetlands which are usually vegetated to some degree. Wetland classes are determined by the predominant vegetation type; that which comprises the uppermost vegetation and an aerial cover of 30% or greater. The most common type in the planning area is the Freshwater Forested/Shrub wetland.

Source: FEMA

B. Air Quality

Any source, operation, or process that has a potential emission of more than five tons of any air pollutant (total suspended particles, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and lead) are required to obtain an air quality permit from the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Air Quality. There are three categories of permitted facilities based upon emission thresholds. A Title V facility has the potential to emit 100 tons or more per year of a common regulated pollutant, 10 tons or more per year of any hazardous air pollutant, or 25 tons or more per year of combined hazardous air pollutants. A synthetic minor facility must take action to ensure that emissions remain below Title V thresholds. The facility's permit obligates it to maintain these lower levels of emissions. A small facility has no potential for exceeding Title V emission thresholds and is thus regulated accordingly.

There are no active air quality permits for facilities within the City limits of Locust.

Source: NCDENR, Division of Air Quality

C. Soils

According to soil data collected by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the soils in the Locust area are primarily Tarrus channery silt loam, Badin channery silt loam, Georgeville silt loam, and Goldston channery silt loam, with slopes ranging from 2% to 15%. Many of the soils present in the area pose serious constraints for development.

Soil Series	Characteristics	Development Constraints
Badin	Moderate depth, Well drained, Moderate permeability	Prime farmland Septic limitations
Chenneby	Deep depth, Poorly drained, Moderate permeability	Seasonal wetness Flooding potential
Chewacla	Shallow depth, Poorly drained, Moderate permeability	Seasonal wetness Flooding potential
Enon	Deep depth, Well drained, Slow permeability	Steep slopes Erosion potential
Georgeville	Deep depth, Well drained, Moderate permeability	Steep slopes Erosion potential
Goldston	Shallow depth, Well drained, Moderately rapid permeability	Shallow depth High volume of slate Septic limitations
Kirksey	Moderate depth, Moderately well drained, Moderately slow permeability	Seasonal wetness
Misenheimer	Shallow depth, Poorly drained, Moderately rapid permeability	Shallow depth High volume of slate Seasonal wetness
Oakboro	Deep depth, Moderately well drained, Moderate permeability	Seasonal wetness Flooding potential
Poindexter	Moderate depth, Well drained, Moderate permeability	Prime farmland Septic limitations
Tarrus	Deep depth, Well drained, Moderate permeability	Steep slopes Erosion potential
Urban Land	N/A	N/A
Water	N/A	N/A

Source: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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